US009189980B2

(12) **United States Patent**
Kidd

(10) **Patent No.: US 9,189,980 B2**
(45) **Date of Patent: Nov. 17, 2015**

(54) **VEHICLE FLAG POLE ASSEMBLY**

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 386 days.

(21) Appl. No.: **13/734,507**

(22) Filed: **Jan. 4, 2013**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

US 2014/0014023 A1 Jan. 16, 2014

Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Provisional application No. 61/583,440, filed on Jan. 5, 2012.

(51) **Int. Cl.**
G09F 17/00 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC ***G09F 17/00*** (2013.01); *G09F 2017/0075* (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
USPC 16/375; 248/682, 689; 403/202, 242
See application file for complete search history.

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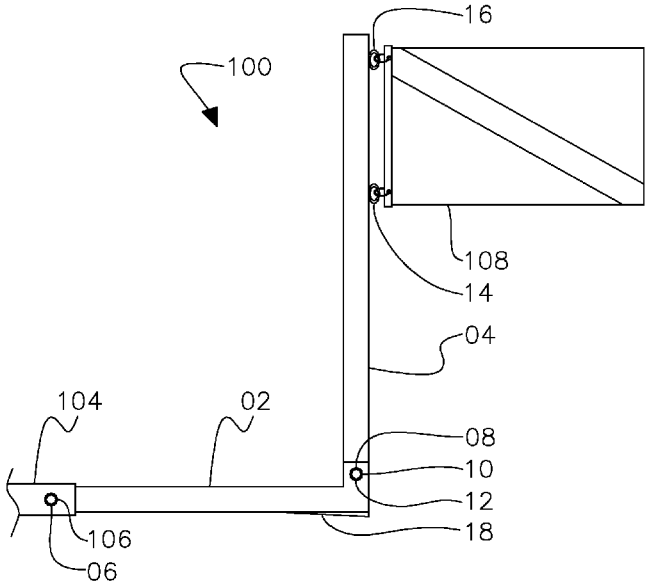
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A flag pole assembly for use with a vehicle having a trailer hitch, the flag pole assembly comprising a horizontal member having oppositely disposed first and distal ends, wherein the horizontal member includes a first hole in the first end to attach the horizontal member to the hitch of a vehicle and the horizontal member is at least thirty inches long, a vertical member coupled to the distal end of the horizontal member and the vertical member extends upward, and at least one attachment link is affixed to the vertical member for attaching a first ornament.

9 Claims, 10 Drawing Sheets



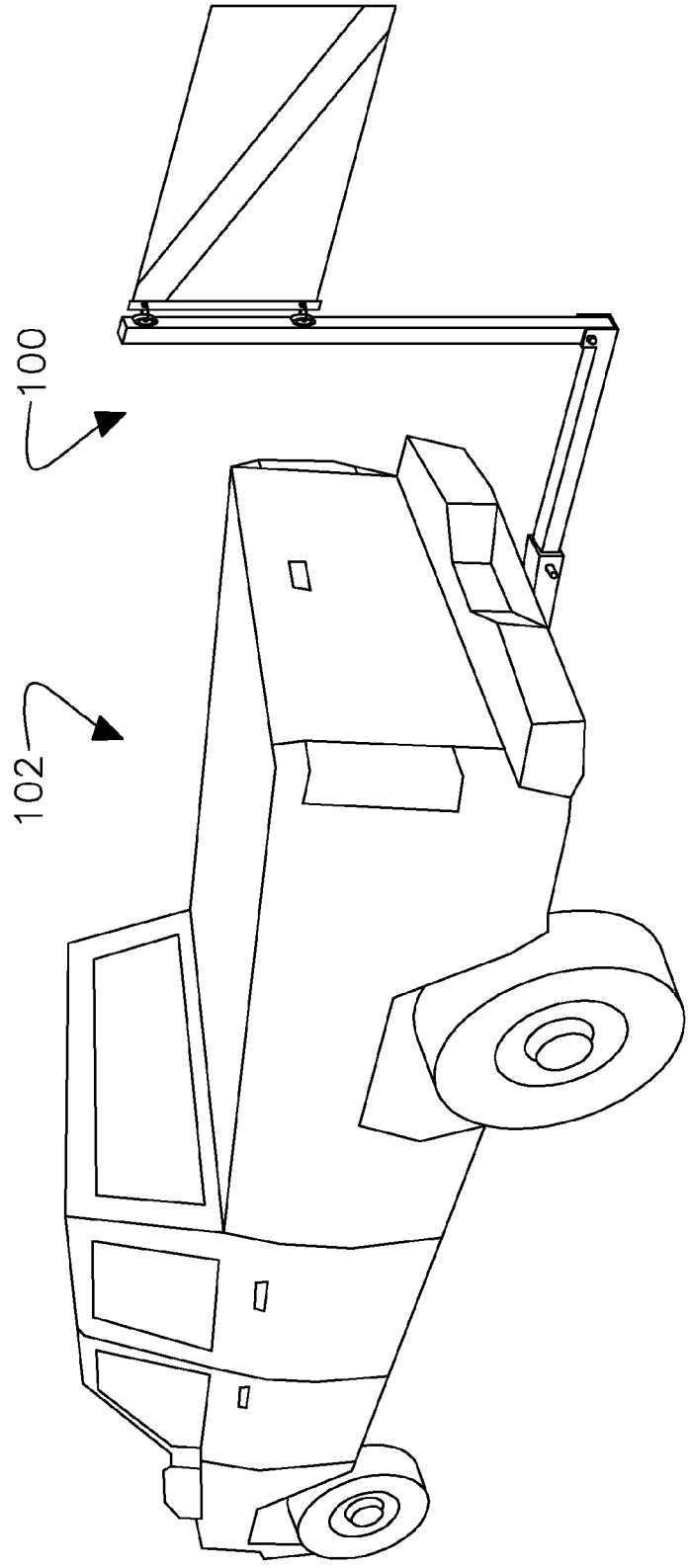


FIG. 1

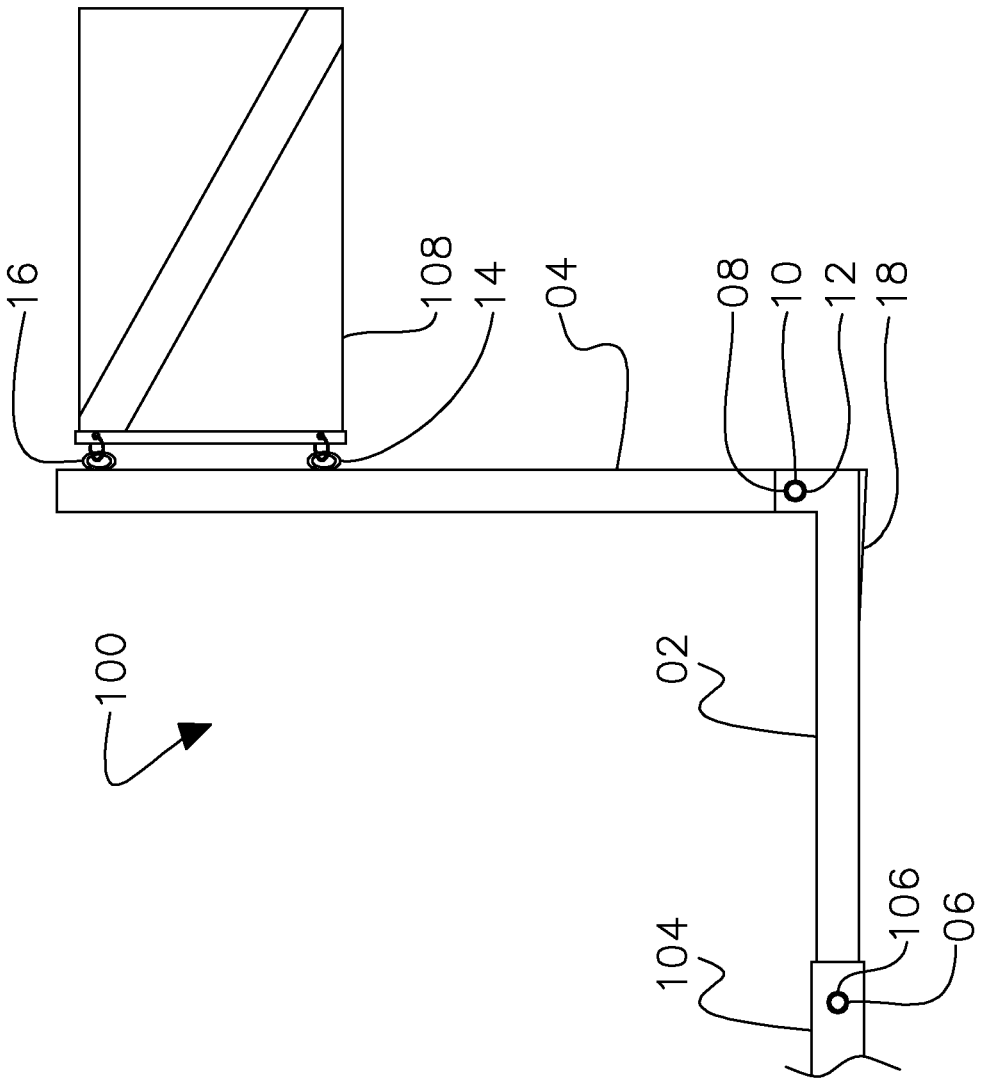


FIG. 2

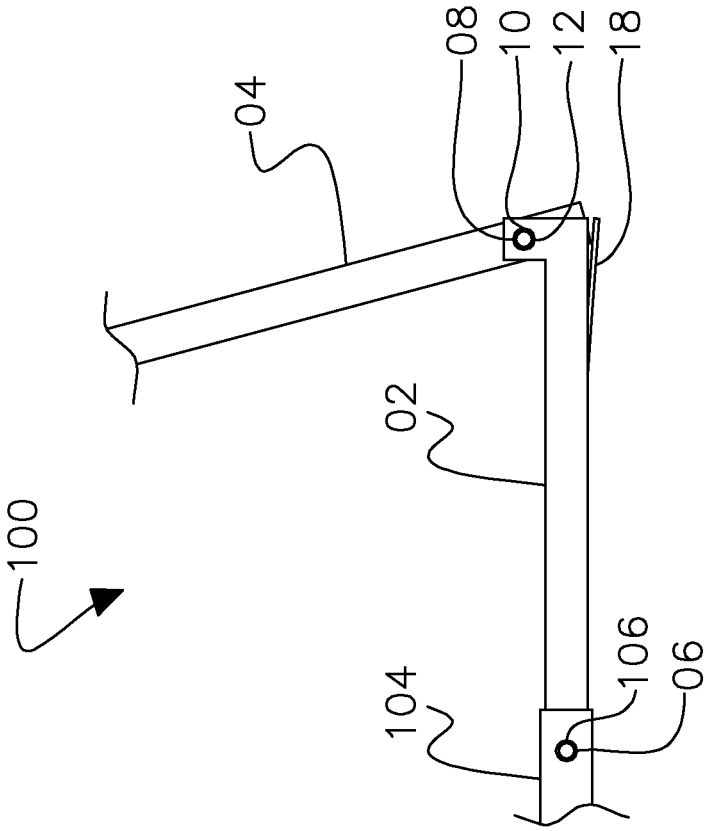


FIG. 3

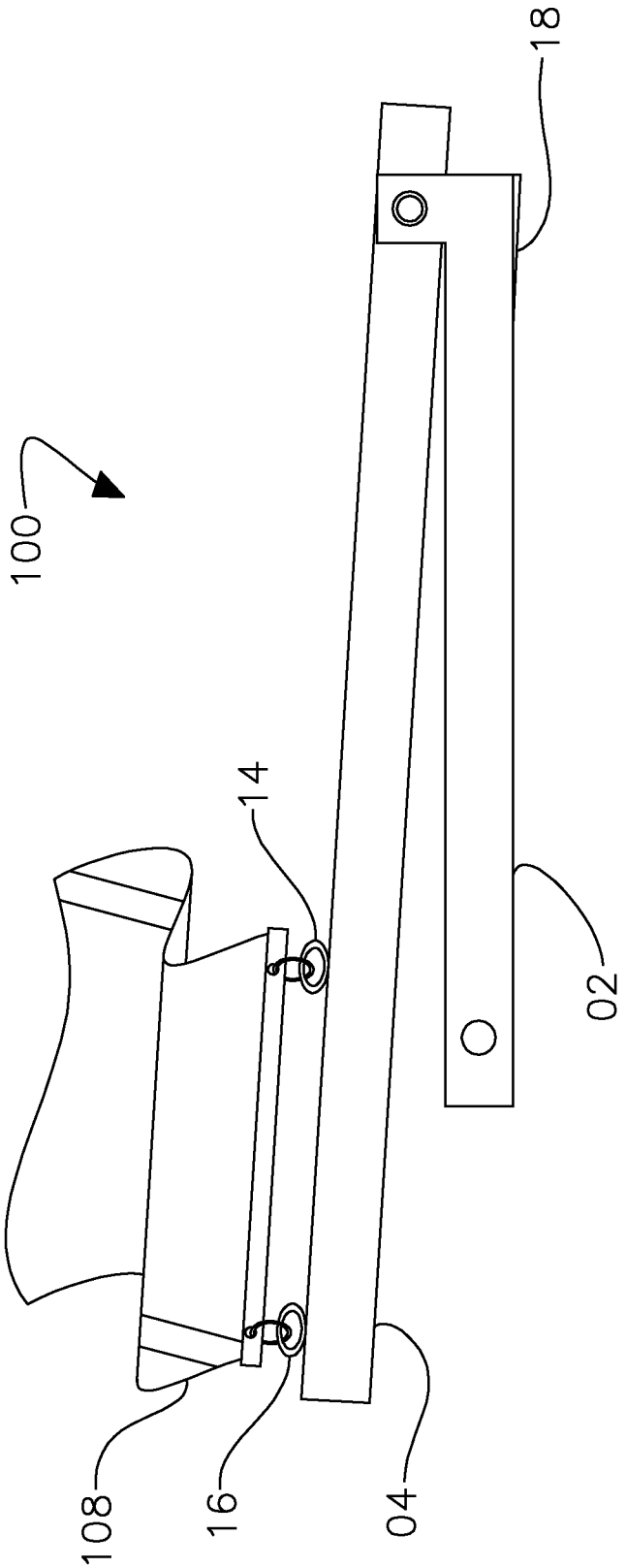


FIG. 4

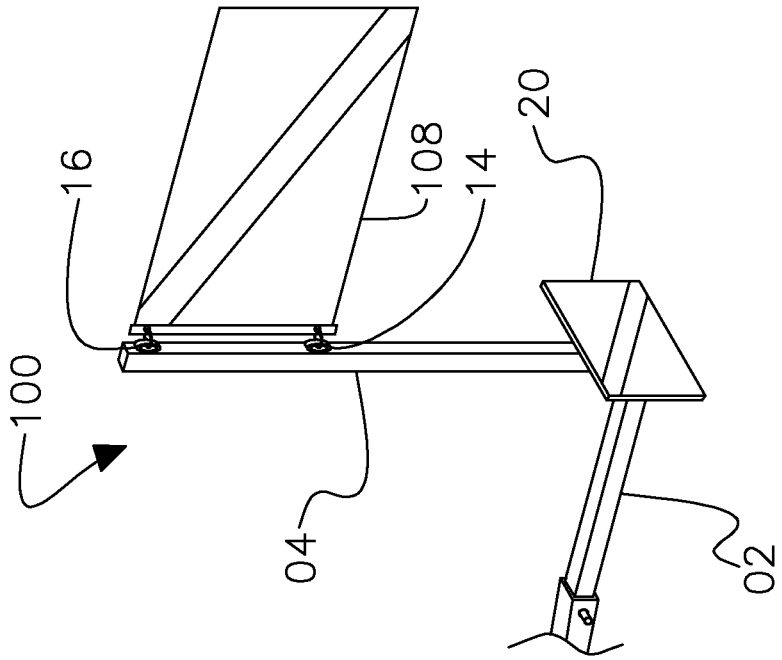


FIG. 5

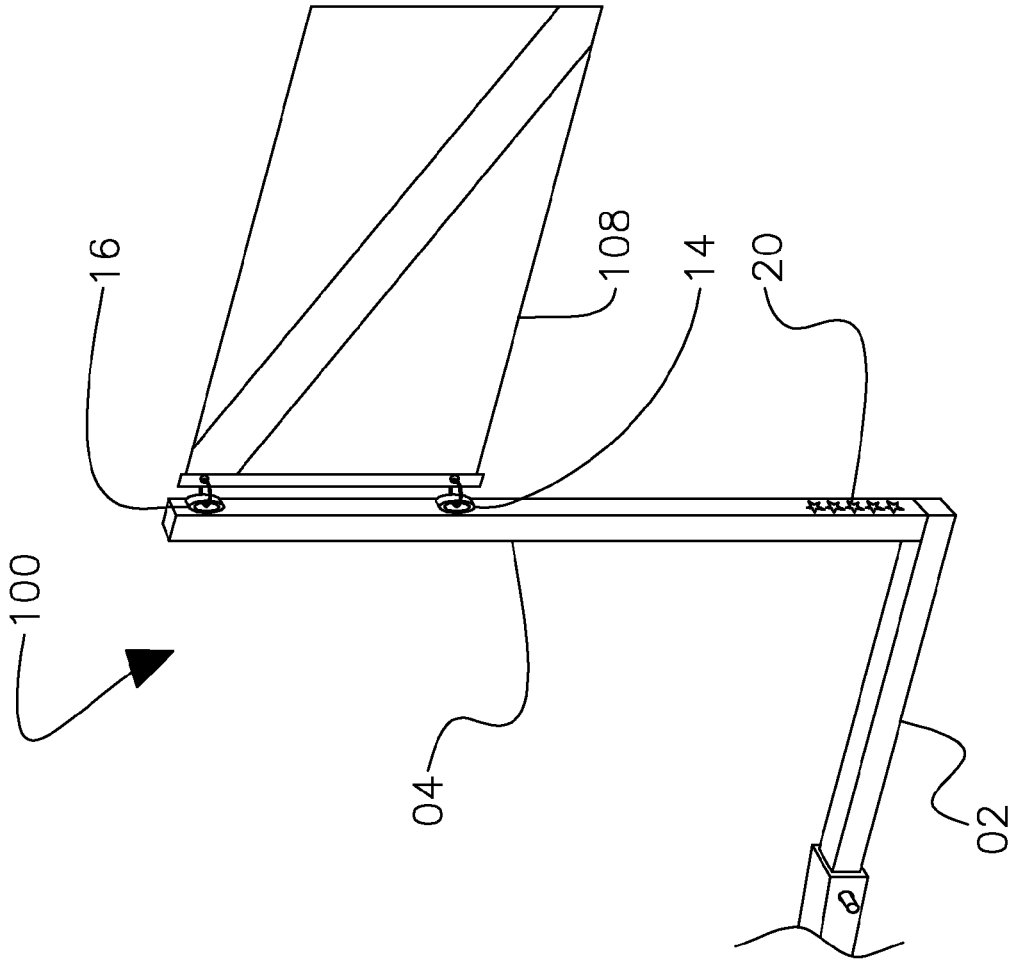


FIG. 6

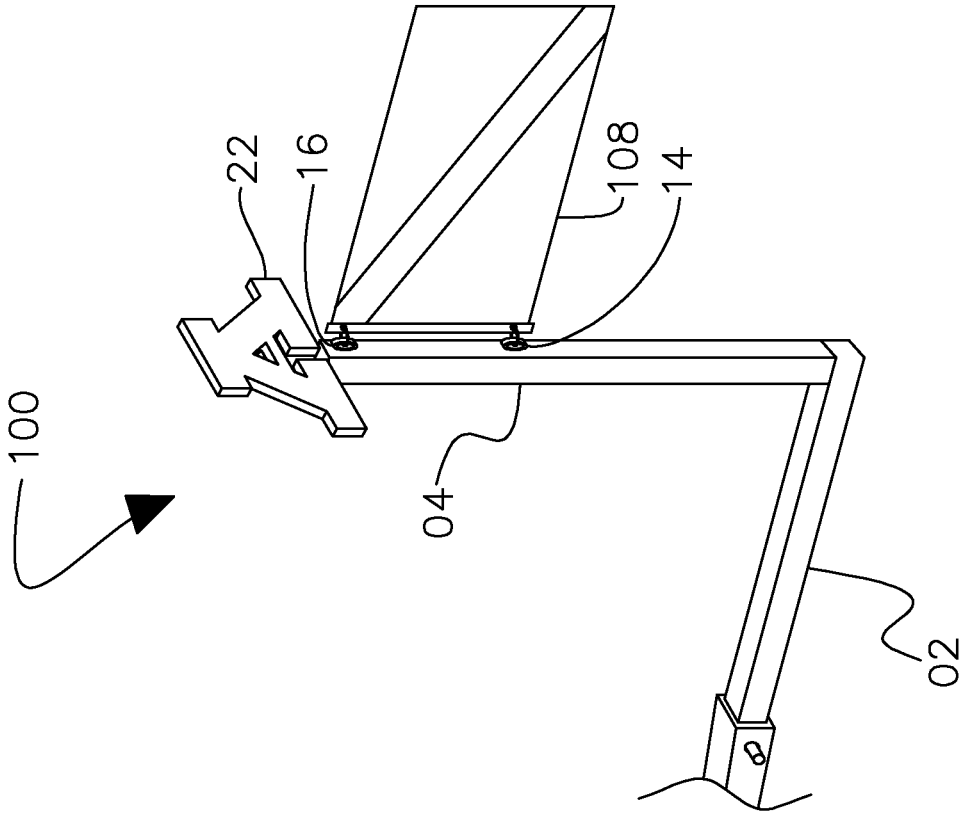


FIG. 7

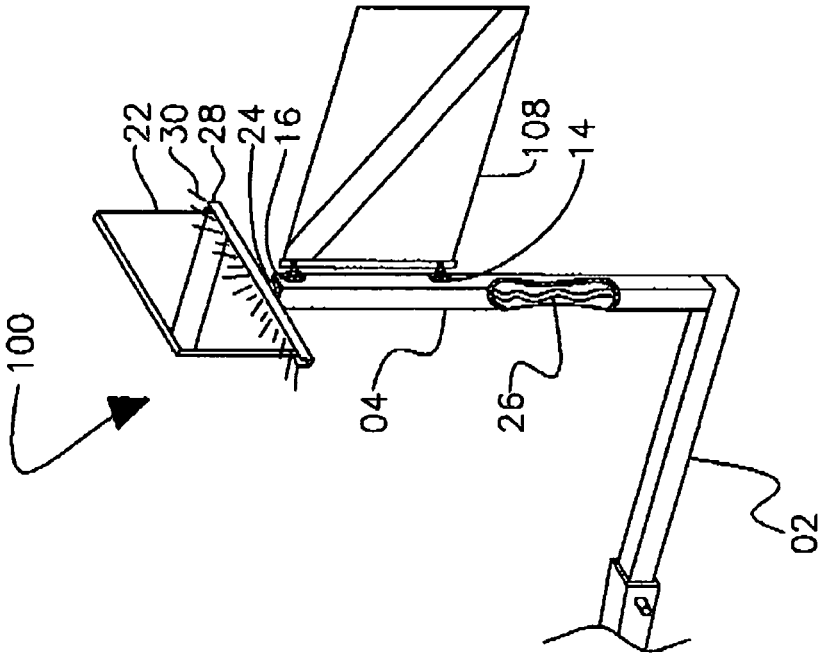


FIG. 8

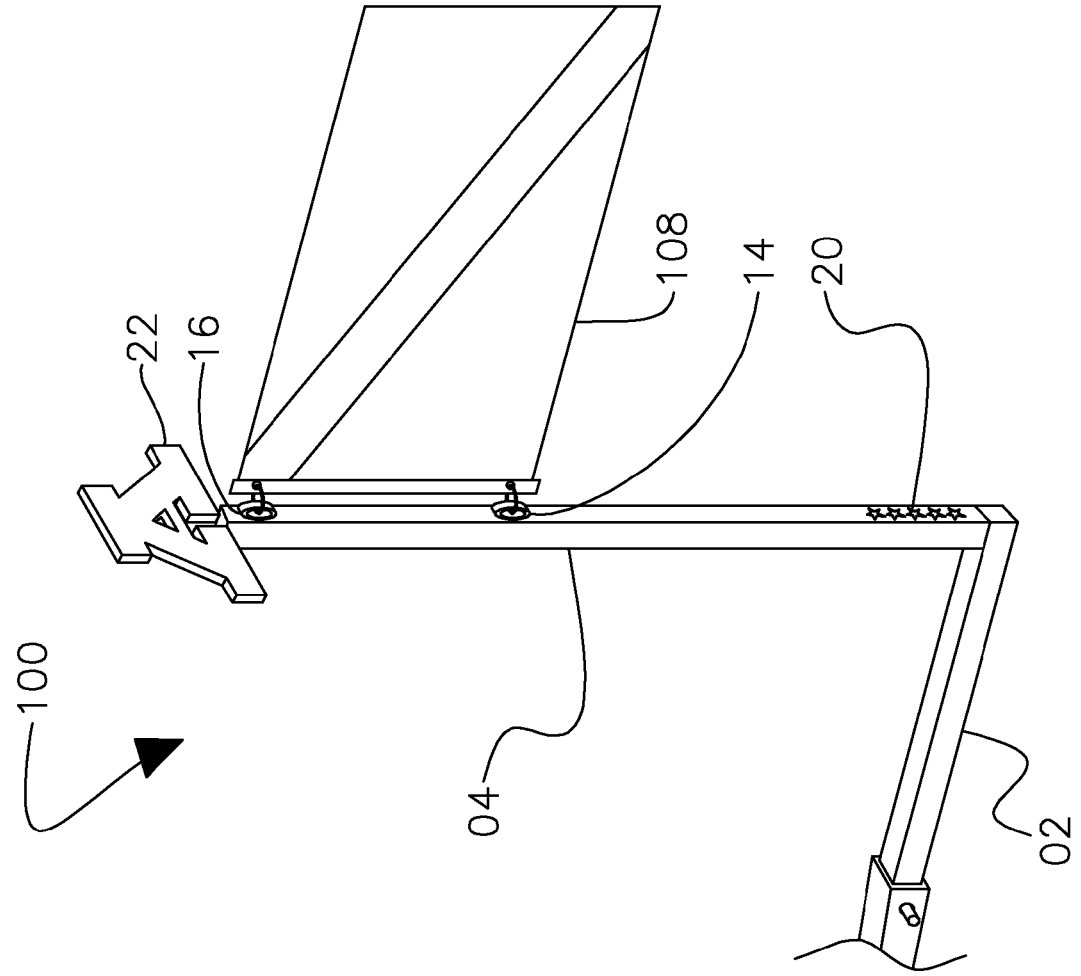


FIG. 9

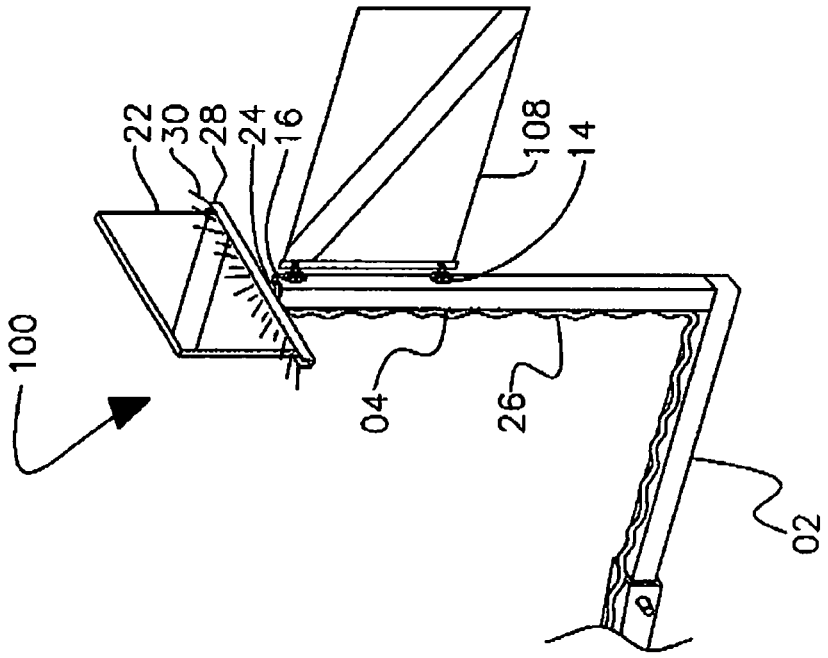


FIG. 10

VEHICLE FLAG POLE ASSEMBLY

CROSS REFERENCES TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

Applicant claims priority under 35 USC 119(e) to provisional application 61/583,440 filed on Jan. 5, 2012.

FIELD OF INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to a flag pole assembly that attaches to a vehicle's trailer hitch. In particular, the invention relates to a flag pole assembly capable of being secured to the trailer hitch of a vehicle for the purpose of displaying a flag, banner, and/or windsock. A sports team ornament, e.g., a logo, graphic, mascot, nickname, and/or chant, may also be displayed above and below the flag to promote allegiance to a particular team. An elongated first member permits a user to open and close the vehicle tailgate without interference from the flag pole assembly.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The accompanying drawings illustrate embodiments of the invention and are for illustration by way of example and not limitations.

FIG. **1** illustrates a top perspective view of a flag pole assembly secured to the trailer hitch of a truck, in accordance with an embodiment of the invention;

FIG. **2** illustrates an elevation view of the flag pole assembly shown in FIG. **1**, including a first ornament, wherein the assembly is in an erect configuration and secured to a trailer hitch, in accordance with an embodiment of the invention;

FIG. **3** illustrates an elevation view of the flag pole assembly shown in FIG. **1**, including a securing tab, and in an intermediate configuration, in accordance with an embodiment of the invention;

FIG. **4** illustrates an elevation view of the flag pole assembly shown in FIG. **1**, in a stored configuration, in accordance with an embodiment of the invention;

FIG. **5** illustrates a top perspective view of a flag pole assembly including a first ornament attached near the top of a vertical member and a second ornament attached near the base of the vertical member, in accordance with an embodiment of the invention;

FIG. **6** illustrates an elevation top perspective view of a flag pole assembly including an alternative embodiment of the second ornament, in accordance with an embodiment of the invention;

FIG. **7** illustrates a top perspective view of a flag pole assembly including a third ornament attached near the top of the vertical member, in accordance with an embodiment of the invention;

FIG. **8** illustrates a top perspective view of a flag pole assembly including an alternative embodiment of the third ornament attached near the top of the vertical member, a light source providing illumination to the third ornament, and an electrical conduit located within the horizontal and vertical members, in accordance with an embodiment of the invention;

FIG. **9** illustrates a top perspective view of a flag pole assembly including a first, second, and third ornament attached to the vertical member, i.e., the first ornament is attached near the top of the vertical member, the second ornament is attached near the base of the vertical member, and the third ornament is attached near the top of the vertical member, in accordance with an embodiment of the invention; and

FIG. **10** illustrates a top perspective view of a flag pole assembly including an alternative embodiment of the third ornament attached near the top of the vertical member, a light source providing illumination to the third ornament, and an electrical conduit located on the exterior surface of the horizontal and vertical members, in accordance with an embodiment of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is to a flag pole assembly **100** as shown in FIGS. **1-10**. Specifically, the invention is a flag pole assembly **100** that is capable of being secured to the trailer hitch of a vehicle **102** (FIG. **1**), and the assembly **100** extends out far enough to permit a user to open and close the vehicle tailgate without inference from the assembly **100**.

As shown in FIG. **2**, the flag pole assembly **100** includes a generally horizontal member **02** at least thirty inches in length and presenting a first and a distal end, and a generally vertical member **04** presenting a base and a top end, the vertical member **04** extending from the distal end of the horizontal member **02**. The members are made of any rigid material, including but not limited to metal, such as steel or aluminum, wood, plastic, or other man-made materials. The horizontal member **02** and the vertical member **04** may be hollow or solid. The horizontal member **02** has a first hole **06** in a first end that allows the user to attach the horizontal member **02** to a trailer hitch receiver **104** by inserting a first fastener **106** through the first hole **06**. The fastener **106** can be a pin, screw, bolt, rivet, or any similar fastener. The distal end of the horizontal member **02** is joined to the vertical member **04** by welding, bonding, or fastening. The horizontal member **02** further includes at least a second hole **08** hear the distal end, and the vertical member **04** includes at least a third hole **10** near the base, wherein the second hole **08** and third hole **10** are aligned. A second fastener **12** is inserted through the second hole **08** and third hole **10**. The horizontal member **02** and vertical member **04** may include additional holes for receiving additional fasteners. The vertical member **04** further includes at least one attachment link **14** near the top end operable to secure a first ornament **108** to the vertical member **04**.

In one embodiment, as shown in FIG. **2**, the vertical member **04** further includes a second attachment link **16** spaced approximately the vertical length of the first ornament **108** from at least one attachment link **14**. The attachment links **14**, **16** can be made of metal, plastic, or other man-made materials and can be attached to the vertical member **04** in various ways, including but not limited to welding and bonding. The first ornament **108** can be a flag, banner, windsock, or similar display that is attached to the flag pole assembly **100** and is used to display team spirit or other passion.

In another embodiment of the invention, as shown in FIGS. **2-4**, the horizontal member **02** further includes a securing tab near the distal end and engaging the base of the vertical member **04**. The securing tab **18** is biased toward a secured configuration, whereby the vertical member **04** is constrained to an erect configuration (FIG. **2**). The user may apply a force to the vertical member **04** sufficient to overcome the bias, whereby the vertical member **04** and securing tab **18** present an intermediate configuration (FIG. **3**). Further application of the force causes the vertical member **04** to become disengaged from the securing tab **18**, thereby resulting in the ver-

tical member **04** being folded toward the horizontal member **02** in a stored configuration, as shown in FIG. **4**.

In another embodiment of the invention, as shown in FIG. **5**, a second ornament **20** is attached below the first ornament **108** near the base of the vertical member **04** to further display team pride. The second ornament **20** may be attached to vertical member **04** in various ways, including but not limited to welding, bonding, and fastening. The second ornament **20** shown in FIG. **5** is a team name, logo, graphic, or mascot made of metal, plastic, or another man-made material. Like the first ornament **108**, the second ornament **20** is easily visible during the day and is illuminated at night by the vehicle's brake lights.

Another embodiment of the second ornament **20** is shown in FIG. **6**, wherein the second ornament **20** is either an appliqué or sticker of a team name, logo, graphic, or mascot that is applied to the base of the vertical member **04** or a team name, logo, graphic, or mascot that is painted on the base of the vertical member **04**.

In another embodiment of the invention, as shown in FIG. **7**, a third ornament **22** is attached above the first ornament **108** and near the top of the vertical member **04** to further exhibit team pride. The third ornament **22** is a team name, logo, graphic, or mascot that is made of metal, plastic, or another man-made material and is attached near the top of vertical member **04** in various ways, including but not limited to welding, bonding, and fastening.

Another embodiment of the third ornament **22** is shown in FIG. **8**. The horizontal member **02** and vertical member **04** are hollow. The third ornament **22** includes a plug **24** that fits inside the top of the vertical member **04** and securely fastens the third ornament **22** to the top of vertical member **04**. An electrical conduit **26** is located inside the hollow horizontal member **02** and vertical member **04**. In this way, the vertical and horizontal members **02**, **04** protect the electrical conduit **26** from weather and incidental damage. The electrical conduit **26** extends out the first end of the horizontal member **02** and attaches to the vehicle's power source. The opposite end of the electrical conduit **26** extends out the top end of vertical member **04** and attaches to a light source **28**. The light source **28** is operable to emit illuminating rays **30** and thereby make this embodiment of the third ornament **22** visible at night. In an alternative embodiment, a battery can be used, instead of the vehicle's power source, to provide power for the light source **28**. Alternatively, the electrical conduit **26** may be fastened to the outside surfaces of horizontal member **02** and vertical member **04** as shown in FIG. **10**.

In another embodiment of the invention, as shown in FIG. **9**, the flag pole assembly **100** includes three ornaments attached to the vertical member **04**, i.e., a first ornament **108** is attached to the vertical member **04** by attachment links; a second ornament **20** is attached near the base of the vertical member **04**; and a third ornament **22** is attached near the top of the vertical member **04**.

Thus, there has been described a flag pole assembly **100**. It is apparent to those skilled in the art, however, that many changes, variations, modifications, other uses, and applications are possible and also such changes, variations, modifications, other uses, and applications which do not depart from the spirit and scope of the invention are deemed covered by the invention, which is limited only by the claims which follow.

What is claimed is:

1. A flag pole assembly for use with a vehicle having a trailer hitch, comprising:

a horizontal member having first and distal ends, wherein the horizontal member includes a first hole in the first end to attach the horizontal member to the hitch of a vehicle and a securing tab near its distal end, the securing tab being biased towards a secured configuration, the horizontal member being least thirty inches long;

a vertical member coupled to the distal end of the horizontal member and extending upward; and

at least one attachment link affixed to the vertical member for attaching a first ornament.

2. The flag pole assembly of claim **1**, wherein the horizontal member includes at least a second hole near the distal end, and the vertical member includes at least a third hole, and further including a fastener, wherein the fastener is inserted through the second and third holes, thereby coupling the distal end of the horizontal member to the base of the vertical member.

3. The flag pole assembly of claim **1**, further comprising a second ornament, wherein the second ornament is attached near the base of the vertical member.

4. The flag pole assembly of claim **1**, further comprising a third ornament, wherein the third ornament is attached near the top end of the vertical member.

5. The flag pole assembly of claim **4**, further comprising an electrical conduit, wherein the electrical conduit is connected to a power source at one end and a light source at the opposite end and the light source is operable to illuminate the third ornament.

6. The flag pole assembly of claim **5**, wherein the power source is a vehicle auxiliary power system.

7. The flag pole assembly of claim **5**, wherein the power source is a battery.

8. The flag pole assembly of claim **5**, wherein the electrical conduit is located on the exterior surface of the horizontal member and vertical members.

9. The flag pole assembly of claim **5**, wherein the horizontal and vertical members are hollow and the electrical conduit is located within the horizontal and vertical members.

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